

To: Harvard Steering Committee

From: Ricardo Lopez and Nora Beck, CMAP

Date: June 15, 2015

Re: Outcomes of the Focus Group and Visioning Workshop meetings

The following describes the outreach activities and engagement results that were conducted during the visioning phase of the comprehensive plan. The goal of the visioning phase is to present key findings from the existing conditions in Harvard, and garner feedback from residents and stakeholders, including their thoughts on potential solutions to the issues and opportunities that were identified during phase one of the planning process. The tools and techniques that CMAP staff employed during the visioning phase of the planning process vary according to the activity, amount of time available, and the specific characteristics of each group. To ensure full participation from participants, CMAP staff employed a combination of the following tools and techniques:

- Keypad polling
- Small group discussion
- Mapping activity

1. Outreach activities

A primary goal of the planning process is to elevate community engagement in planning –particularly focusing on engaging populations that are typically underrepresented in previous planning processes. To accomplish this, CMAP staff employed an outreach strategy that included keeping past participants, residents, and stakeholders abreast of public events through various communications means, including emails, postcards, posters, and project webpage. All promotional materials were available in Spanish, including meeting presentations and activities. In addition, a media advisory was sent to the local newspaper. In an effort to keep participants informed of project updates, email addresses were captured at each public meeting. These email addresses were added to the Plan’s master database of contacts at the end of each meeting so that participants continue to receive project updates.

2. Focus Group Meeting

The Hispanic or Latino population constitutes over 45 percent of the population in Harvard. To better understand their needs and opportunities as residents of the Harvard community, a Spanish-speaking workshop was designed to introduce Latino stakeholders to the project. The workshop was held on Sunday, May 17 before the regular scheduled mass at the *Asamblea Apostolica de la Fe en Cristo Rey*. During the workshop, Staff explained the comprehensive planning process and walked participants through a polling exercise. Participants were asked a number of questions about their priorities and preference in respect to open spaces, residential areas, commercial areas, and transportation. In total, 27 Latino residents provided input during this interactive engagement activity. The charts that follow show the meeting participants’ polling results.

Q1. Which statement best describes your relationship with Harvard? (<i>multiple choice</i>)	Responses	
I live here	12	48%
I live and work here	8	32%
I work here	1	4%
I am a visitor	4	16%
Total counts	25	100%

Q2. What are the top 2 issues that need to be addressed at the neighborhood level? <i>(priority ranking)</i>	Responses	
Walkability	10	11%
Housing quality	11	12%
Access to commercial areas	13	15%
Parks and recreation	35	39%
Housing vacancy	1	1%
Flooding	0	0%
Safety	20	22%
Total <i>(weighted count)</i>	90	100%

Q3. What are the top 2 issues that need to be addressed to improve Harvard's commercial areas? <i>(priority ranking)</i>	Responses	
More retail options	21	23%
Diversity of retail options	4	4%
Physical appearance	5	6%
Access	1	1%
More employers	51	55%
Parking	10	11%
Total <i>(weighted count)</i>	92	100%

Q4. What are the top 2 issues that need to be addressed to improve travel throughout the City? <i>(priority ranking)</i>	Responses	
Sidewalks	17	18%
Bicycle lanes/trails	18	20%
Road conditions	29	32%
Bus services	27	29%
Traffic congestion	1	1%
Parking	0	0%
Total <i>(weighted count)</i>	92	100%

Q5. What are the top 2 issues that would improve your enjoyment of outdoor recreation spaces? <i>(priority ranking)</i>	Responses	
Community events	21	23%
Trails for walking/biking	19	21%
Park amenities	4	4%
Location and accessibility	2	2%
More recreation areas	44	49%
Total <i>(weighted count)</i>	90	100%

Q6. What are the top 2 capital projects the City should undertake? <i>(priority ranking)</i>	Responses	
Roadway maintenance	22	24%
Residential building conditions	24	26%
Commercial building conditions	12	13%
Flooding prevention	15	16%
Police and Fire services	19	21%
Total <i>(weighted count)</i>	92	100%

Q7. Where do you shop for different types of merchandise? (select all that apply)	Responses	
Harvard	16	43%
Woodstock	3	8%
Crystal Lake	7	19%
Rockford	3	8%
Walworth, Wisconsin	1	3%
McHenry	6	16%
Other	1	3%
Marengo	0	0%
Total Counts	37	100%

Q8. How often do you shop at stores in Harvard? (multiple choice)	Responses	
Daily	6	24%
Weekly	19	76%
Monthly	0	0%
Never	0	0%
Total counts	25	100%

Q9. How do you travel to your daily activities (select all that apply)	Responses	
Personal car	23	85%
Walk	3	11%
Bike	0	0%
Bus	1	4%
Metra Train	0	0%
Total counts	27	100%

Demographics

The charts that follow show the demographic data of the focus group participants. The majority of attendees were Latino (100 percent), and between the ages of 35 and 49 (48 percent). About 46 percent of meeting participants have lived/worked in Harvard between 11 and 20 years and 43 percent live/work in Harvard because of friends and family. When asked about their interest in the planning process, 60 percent said they would rather continue to meet at the church for future engagement opportunities for the Harvard comprehensive plan.

Q10. What is your age? (multiple choice)	Responses	
Less than 19	4	16%
20 – 34	8	32%
35 – 49	12	48%
50 – 64	1	4%
65+	0	0%
Total counts	25	100%

Q11. What is your race or ethnicity (multiple choice)	Responses	
White	0	0%
Hispanic/Latino	25	100%
African American/Black	0	0%
Asian/Pacific Islander	0	0%
Other	0	0%
Total counts	25	100%

Q12. How long have you lived/worked in Harvard? (multiple choice)	Responses	
0 – 5 years	6	25%
6 – 10 years	4	17%
11 – 20 years	11	46%
21 – 40 years	3	13%
41+ years	0	0%
Total counts	24	100%

Q13. Why do you live/work in Harvard? (multiple choice)	Responses	
Affordable	1	4%
Friends and Family	10	43%
Born and raised here	3	13%
Work here	2	9%
City character	4	17%
Close to work	3	13%
Total counts	23	100%

Q14. Which of the following statements best describes your interest in regards to the pain? (multiple choice)	Responses	
I plan to attend the visioning workshop on May 20	6	24%
I rather meet at the church as we did today	15	60%
I am not interested	4	16%
Total counts	23	100%

3. Visioning Workshop

The Visioning Workshop for the Harvard Comprehensive Planning Process was held on Wednesday, May 20 at 6:30 pm at the Harvard Diggins Library. There were approximately 16 people in attendance, including several members of the steering committee. After a brief introduction and a presentation on the key findings of the existing conditions report, the group divided into smaller groups and used a booklet to step through a number of questions on 5 main topics. After the discussion, the groups presented the big ideas that were generated and voted on the overall list. The following is a brief summary of the information gathered at the meeting.

Agricultural, Land, and Water Resources. Participants identified a number of areas (see Figure 1) that should remain in agricultural production and recommended focusing development on underutilized and vacant land within the municipal boundary. Farming incubators were seen as a way to assist the next generation of farmers; others recommended utilizing easements to preserve farms. A number of natural areas were also identified that should be conserved given their natural resources. Participants advocated for the use of existing programs for state assistance to reduce their property tax burden via conservation measures. Regarding water conservation and efficiency, participants recommended education to promote better practices and to investigate raising water rates to encourage conservation.

Community Engagement. Participants identified several activities that could bring the Harvard community together, including additional events downtown and library and park district programs. Other ideas include a concert or movie in the park series, Moose events, and Art show. Participants expressed concern about volunteer fatigue and are hesitant to add more events without finding more leaders to spearhead the efforts. To engage the Latino community, the library family nights, senior

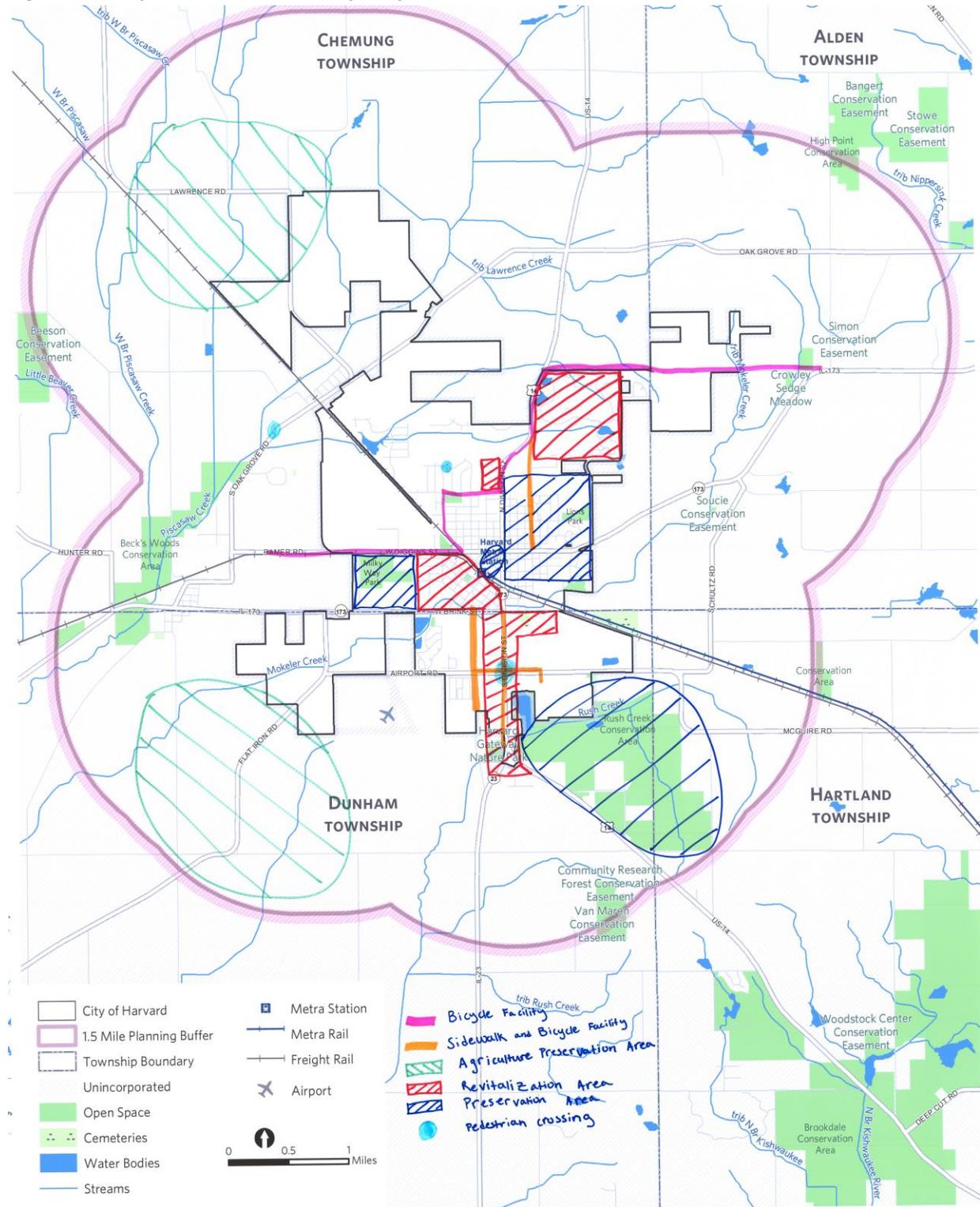
center, and starline were seen as potential avenues; as well as figuring out a way to have Church events include more people and getting more Latino leadership on City committees and projects. Community gathering places were identified, including downtown, the library, and the churches.

Economic Development. Participants identified assets within the community as the best opportunities for economic development – the Starline, Ayer Street, Gateway Park. Local shopping campaigns and creating a Farmer’s Market were seen as important strategies to support the community’s assets. A number of locations were identified as prime areas for revitalization and/or redevelopment, see Figure 1.

Homes and Neighborhoods. Participants identified several areas that they felt were important to preserve the character it has today as well as other neighborhoods in need of revitalization (see Figure 1). In the future, participants would like to see new housing go into existing neighborhoods, particularly the newer subdivisions, before any large expansion. If there is new residential development, some participants recommended using conservation design principles to conserve open spaces and groundwater infiltration. While the number and size of the current city parks are considered sufficient, continued maintenance as well as specific improvements to parks were mentioned, including Mary Ayers Park and Lyons Park. Community gardening was considered to have potential; in addition to existing agricultural lands, Milky Way Park could be a good location.

Transportation. Participants stressed the importance of fixing current sidewalks and linking existing sidewalks and trails to parks. Priority areas for adding sidewalks are called out in Figure 1, including Division Street, near the Junior High, and Milky Way Park. Bicycle facilities were also recommended, such as completing the two block gap to Milky Way Park and conducting a bicycle assessment to figure out the safest route and then marking and promoting the network. Improving the streetscaping along Division Street was seen as important; in addition to sidewalks that would connect nearby neighborhoods, upgraded crosswalks, street trees, and Pace bus shelters. Participants also stated that tighter development regulations (use and appearance) and that relocating the power lines underground would help to improve the appearance of Division Street. In addition to increasing Metra service, some participants saw potential in a bus shuttle service from Crystal Lake to Harvard on the weekends. A taxi or Uber car service was desired by many residents.

Figure 1. Compilation of Small Group Maps.



Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, 2015.

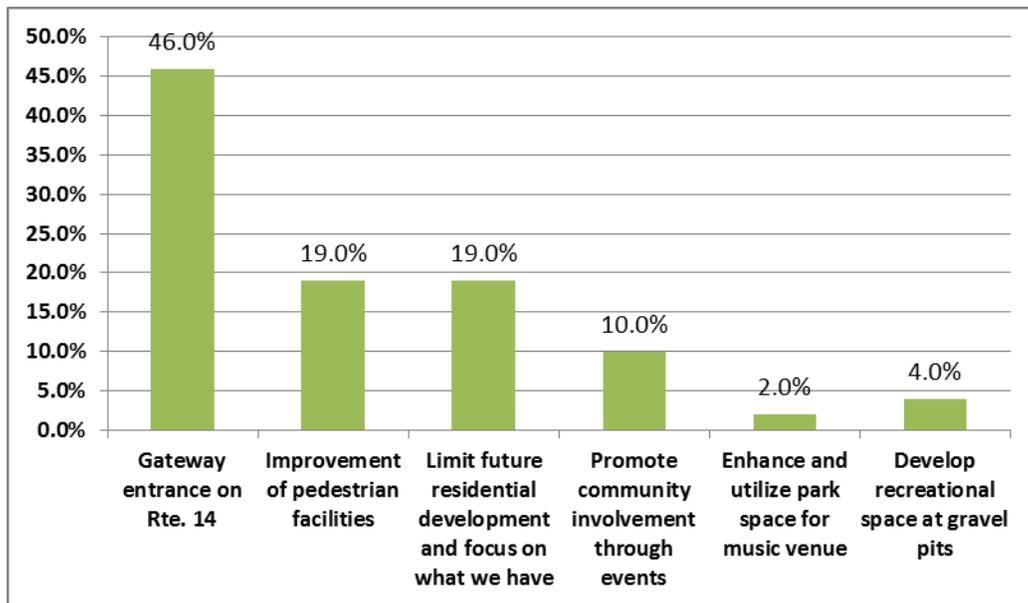
The “Big Ideas”

Each of the smaller groups was asked to provide its most important idea from a workbook exercise. Although the Comprehensive Plan will take all of the ideas and comments into consideration, asking groups to choose their top idea provides a view of important projects and the attendees’ most pressing concerns.

The top ideas expressed during the meeting and voted on by individuals at the workshop were:

1. Gateway entrance on Rte. 14
2. Improvement of pedestrian facilities
3. Limit future residential development and focus on what we have
4. Promote community involvement through events
5. Enhance and utilize park space for music venue
6. Develop recreational space at gravel pits.

A total of 16 participants attended the visioning workshop to provide input. After discussing ideas within each key topic, participants were asked to prioritize these ideas using keypad polling technology. Of all the options, participants felt gateway improvements at the City’s entrance on Route 14 was a top priority. They would also like to see improvements made to pedestrian facilities and focus on the City’s existing infrastructure while limiting future residential development.



Demographics

The charts that follow show the demographic data of the visioning workshop participants. The majority of attendees were Caucasian (100 percent), and between the ages of 50 and 64 (56 percent). About 50 percent of meeting participants have lived in Harvard between 21 and 40 years and 31 percent were born and or raised in Harvard.

Q10. What is your age? (multiple choice)	Responses	
Less than 19	0	0%
20 – 34	0	0%
35 – 49	2	13%
50 – 64	9	56%
65+	5	31%
Total counts	16	100%

Q11. What is your race or ethnicity (multiple choice)	Responses	
African American/Black	0	0%
Asian/Pacific Islander	0	0%
Hispanic/Latino	0	0%
White	16	100%
Other	0	0%
Total counts	16	100%

Q12. How long have you lived/worked in Harvard? (multiple choice)	Responses	
0 – 5 years	2	13%
6 – 10 years	0	0%
11 – 20 years	2	13%
21 – 40 years	8	50%
41+ years	4	25%
Total counts	16	100%

Q13. Why do you live/work in Harvard? (multiple choice)	Responses	
Born and or raised here	5	31%
Work here	1	6%
Close to work	1	6%
City character	3	19%
Friends and family	2	13%
Affordable	4	25%
Total counts	16	100%